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ABSTRACT

This teachers' guide responds to some of the more frequently asked questions about teaching and evaluating from Kindergarten through Grade 5. The document is a synthesis of the current research on writing and applies this information to the teaching of writing in the classroom. It is comprehensive in nature and addresses such subjects as student-centered writing workshops, student-generated topics, goals for writers, important elements in the teaching of composition, discourse features, the role of revision, rationale for and types of writing folders, self-assessment, documentation of student writing and of instruction, and inventive spelling. Materials include samples of student writing and teacher comments, check sheets on whole class writing goals and student writing goals, plan books and grade books, illustrations of classroom spelling resources, and daily classroom schedules for writing and reading projects. The addendum includes a prescription for a successful program, a detailed report of one child's progress (Melissa), a sample letter (with a Spanish translation) to parents concerning inventive spelling and cumulative writing folders, a guide for parents on how to review their child's writing folder, and a rationale for parents on the length and complexity of their child's writing samples. (KEH)

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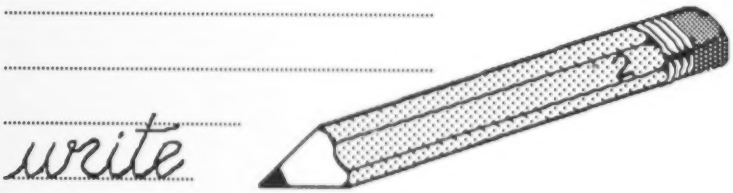
GRADES K-5

A FURTHER WORD: THE TEACHING OF WRITING



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TO THE TEACHER

A Further Word responds to some of the more frequently asked questions about teaching and evaluating writing. The document was prepared with the help and suggestions of local teachers, many of whom discovered through their own teaching, answers to those questions that trouble all of us who work with developing writers.

The document does not purpose to be complete. There are still questions to be asked and answers to be found. But it is a synthesis of what we know now and how we can fit what we know now into the parameters that define the educational system.

I would like to acknowledge the efforts and contributions of all those teachers who have shared their expertise with the Keystone Writing Staff.

And I am especially grateful for those who shared with us writing samples and writing histories of the hundreds of developing writers across this district. It is, after all, these writing samples that are the most powerful and humane testimony to the teachers who informed *A Further Word*.

Sally Hampton

Sally Hampton, Coordinator
Keystone Writing Project

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WRITING WORKSHOP

The Student-Centered Classroom

Learning to write and writing to learn are essential parts of a student's total education. Because writing effectively is a cumulatively attained skill, students benefit most from a consistent and comprehensive writing program. Students, therefore, must be provided the opportunity to write on a routine basis in a risk-free environment.

Although most people learned to write through very structured, very traditional instruction, current research shows that writing is a process and that the purposes of writing are best achieved when instruction allows for each of the appropriate phases of the writing process. Traditionally, teachers would assign topics and students would write. Instruction took place in the form of a grade, corrections, and comments on student papers; that is, students learned how to write as a result of the mistakes they made in their writing. Clearly for many this product based model of composition instruction was to a degree adequate; for some, however, this method proved intimidating and restrictive.

The writing process, best taught and used in a workshop atmosphere, allows the writer to generate ideas (prewrite), make drafts (write), elicit response (share), revise, edit, and make a final clean copy (publish). In a writing workshop the classroom is student-centered, rather than teacher-centered; the students work in an atmosphere of inquiry, cooperation, and trust, supported by a great deal of group interaction; and the teacher, while retaining his or her position as group educator, is a learner along with the rest of the class.

This form of teaching provides students not only with the opportunity to read and study published writers, but also with the chance to view themselves as authors. They become aware of what constitutes good writing and so develop criteria for evaluating writing; they venture into and ultimately assimilate challenging cognitive skills and functions. Writing becomes for students a means for self-discovery and self-expression, as well as a method for problem solving.

Further, a writing process program fosters skills that extend to all content areas since it engages students in learning/thinking operations, allows students to interact with one another, reinforces concepts learned, and requires the students to become more actively involved in their own learning.

TOPICS FOR WRITERS

To become involved in their own learning and to have a vested interest in a piece of writing, students should generate their own topics. It is only when writers have a genuine interest in a topic that good writing develops, so teacher imposed topics quite often elicit perfunctory responses. What teachers should strive to do is to make each student responsible for finding and developing topics. Student generated topic lists on a bulletin board are one way to move students away from teacher dependency for topics; individual possible topic lists within writing folders are another.

<u>Story starters are inappropriate</u> and should not be used to generate student writings.

WITHIN THE CLASSROOM: WRITERS' GOALS

The development of writing ability is a highly individual process, dependent to some extent upon the child's background, self-esteem, literacy experiences, age, etc. Within any classroom there will be a range of literacy levels. Consequently, writing goals will vary considerably from student to student. However, the district objectives specified for each grade level must inform teacher instruction and be the ultimate goal for each child at that grade level. For instance, by the end of the second grade, students are expected to be able to do the following types of writing: informative narrative (i.e., process or "how to" papers); expressive narrative (stories built around a central problem and resolution); and informative descriptive (essays that mention visual details in a picture and indicate spatial relations among objects in the picture). Students will need to understand and have opportunities to practice using features (of content, organization, and style) that are appropriate to each of these types of writings.

At the start of the school year, however, some second grade students may not have developed the concept of sound-letter correlation; others may not be able to generate more than one or two sentences; still others may be able to write extended narratives but not understand how to write introductions or conclusions for those narratives. The job of the teacher, of course, is to move all these students toward district objectives. Naturally, however, initial expectations for these students will differ. Some may need to develop sound-letter correlation, while others may need work on fluency (in the case of students who can produce only one or two sentences) or on writing introductions and conclusions.

Because writing development is so highly individualistic, whole-class writing goals must be global. For instance, an appropriate goal at all grade levels would be for <u>all</u> students to take risks with writing. Such a goal could be defined in various ways that meet an array of student abilities. For some students, this goal might mean trying to write in different modes; for others it might mean leaning to use inventive spelling, or attempting new types of introductions, or writing longer pieces, etc.

When developing individual student goals in writing, the teacher and the student must work together to define goals that are developmentally appropriate. Students should have a copy of their individual goals in their writing folders so that they are aware of these goals.

WHAT IS IMPORTANT IN TEACHING WRITING

For many years, it has been common practice for teachers to apply task analysis to writing. For example, teachers addressing the expressive narrative would isolate the discrete features associated with this mode and would teach each feature in some kind of hierarchical order until the writer had mastered control of each feature and could somehow put them all together and produce the expressive narrative. Other teachers would begin with the parts of speech, then move to whole sentences, paragraphs, and finally "compositions." <u>Such instruction does not produce good writing or good writers</u>.

Writing cannot be taught piecemeal. Language--either oral language or written language--can not be broken into a series of discrete skills through which students move in a linear manner. Writing is a system composed of interactive subsystems and should be taught as such.

Recent research indicates writers are served by the opportunity to transact with whole texts, and the state emphasizes the importance of large scale issues such as organization and development of ideas by asking students to produce a whole text on the TEAMS assessment.

For example, the assessment at grade three calls for three different types of writing, each of which makes its own unique demands for organization and idea development. Consider the expressive narrative, one form students in grade three must master. The *TEAMS Instructional Strategies Guide for Written Composition* explains that the key element to successful narration is "the progression of events through time. Whatever vehicle for relating events is employed, the story line must move from a beginning to an ending. Shifts in time and location and appearances and disappearances of characters must be explained. Many successful narratives are introduced with a scenario involving conflict . . . the resolving of the conflict moves the story line. The final resolution of the conflict provides the ending." Additionally, the successful narrative will exhibit appropriate elaboration, varied syntactic constructions and word choices, and effective narrative devices. All of these concerns require far more from writers than simply attending to the writing subskills traditionally emphasized.

Beyond expectations specific to various forms of written discourse, the TEAMS assessment raises still other large scale concerns. The writer must learn to be sensitive to audience, to be specific enough so the text is clear for the intended reader, and to offer arguments or examples that are appropriate for a specific audience. The writer must organize the text in ways that are appropriate in terms of the expectations associated with specific tasks. The writer must also provide adequate support or elaboration for the writing to be successful. And the writer must not lead the reader astray by including information that is not relevant or that would subvert the writer's perspective.

These writer goals shape text, and each goal demands a degree of expertise on the part of the writer, an expertise that should be the focus of both instruction and evaluation. However, too often instruction and evaluation ignore these large scale issues and focus instead on writing microissues such as punctuation, capitalization, usage, etc., even though research indicates that it is the opportunity to produce whole texts that allows students to grow as writers. Research also shows that as a writer orchestrates the demands of various language subskills (orthographic, semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic), literacy knowledge develops because increased demands from one subsystem affect the production of another. Therefore, teachers must focus on whole text production.

In summary, novice writers should develop their skills through producing whole pieces of text and refine their abilities by revising and extending, adding to texts which they produce, not by putting together a list of discrete features.

And the focus for evaluation, like the focus for teaching must extend beyond isolated features. Because teachers have tended to focus on microissues (such as spelling, handwriting, or grammar), and because they have ignored the more important issues, the macroissues (such as organization), many students cannot produce writing that matters, that says something logically, cohesively, persuasively. Lewis Branscomb, the head of the Carnegie Commission, acknowledged this problem when he said that to his way of thinking, the way to evaluate the quality of a school would be to bring all graduating seniors into a room, provide them with pencil and paper, and then ask them to write something worthwhile in a manner worth reading. Such writing would, he hoped, reflect an instructional program that encouraged students to think through issues and to express themselves routinely in text whose purpose was exploratory or persuasive or explanatory. Yet, most students believe that what counts most in a piece of writing is not meaning but control of subskills because the subskills are what they have been taught.

In order to change student perceptions about writing, teachers need to emphasize through evaluation procedures and through goal setting procedures the importance or organization and thinking. Teachers can then shape and expand those texts students are initially capable of producing and address the various conventions of writing as students go through the year-long instructional program.

TEAMS MODES

Because of the kinds of writing assessed on the TEAMS test, students at all grade levels beyond kindergarten should be asked to do the types of writing specified by TEAMS. This means that

- students in grades one, two, and three should write informative and expressive narratives and informative descriptive texts; and
- students in grades four and five should be able to address the modes specific to grades one through three but also develop control of the informative classificatory and persuasive descriptive modes.

Note: Extensive drill on a particular mode is nonproductive and will inhibit rather than promote students' writing development. Thus, work on TEAMS should be just one part of an instructional program. Within each two-week period, teachers should specify perhaps one assignment to a TEAMS-like prompt. By encouraging students to embed discourse features within pieces whose focus is a topic of interest to them, teachers encourage writing variety and avoid drill.

DISCOURSE FEATURES

The modes tested at the elementary level share some basic characteristics. That is, all of them have an introduction, a body, and a conclusion; and all of them make use of transition words and elaboration. One way to address the demands of the TEAMS writing sample, then, without drill, would be to emphasize features (for example, various forms of introductions or conclusions) in an array of modes like personal narratives or reports or whatever mode the student chooses to generate.

Following is a chart which illustrates the features specific to various modes. It would be appropriate for teachers to make students aware of these features and to encourage writers to experiment with the various possibilities by adding to or reshaping their texts. Knowledge of features also makes self-assessment an easier process (See page 9).

DISCOURSE FEATURES

Mode	Informative Narrative	Expressive Narrative	Informative Descriptive
Introduction	Indicates what student will write about (as, So you want to know how to make a bed). May begin with a brief narrative (My brother wandered into my room and asked . . . So I said . . .)	Creates a scene, introduces character(s) and conflict (It was a dark and rainy night. I was at home alone when suddenly I heard . . .)	Tells you what the student is looking at (I am looking at a picture of a bear riding a bicycle . . .) May begin with a brief narrative (I walked by a room and saw a bear. Here's what I saw: . . .)
Transition Words	References to time (first, next, etc.)	References to time and to reasons things happen (When we heard it, we ran because we thought . . .)	Location words (to the right, at the bottom, etc.)
Body	Steps or events in a process	Problem/solution pattern: rising action, climax, falling action	Visual details arranged in an appropriate pattern, organized logically
Elaboration	Details that would let readers carry out the process	Details that let readers see what's happening, what characters did, how characters felt, dialogue	Details that let readers visualize the picture, see the location of objects, and visualize objects in relation to one another
Conclusion	Refers to introduction	Basic conflict of story is ended - final resolution	Refers to introduction

DISCOURSE FEATURES

Mode	Persuasive Descriptive	Informative Classification
Introduction	Orients reader, gives reason for writing, describes position	Orients reader, acknowledges purpose for writing
Transition Words	One, another, the next, also, last, finally	On one hand, another, by contrast, also, however
Body	A series of reasons/facts and accompanying elaboration for writer's stated position	A careful analysis of advantages/disadvantages, likenesses/differences, good/bad qualities of something, comparison/contrast of specific features
Elaboration	Examples of testimony that support the reasons	Pertinent facts/details common to both sides of an issue
Conclusion	Sums up reasons for position, may restate position, and/or make some sort of appeal to audience; ties into introduction	Sums up analysis; ties into introduction

THE ROLE OF REVISION

Revision is an essential part of the writing process. In fact, it is through revision strategies that we are able to distinguish between the novice and the experienced writer. The novice writer assumes a first-draft-final-draft stance, never really revising but merely proof reading and recopying, usually for neatness; the experienced writer, on the other hand, is willing to go back through a piece in order to make major changes that address purpose, audience, and mode. For example, the experienced writer might change a piece by adding information that he/she feels the intended audience would need to know. Or the writer might change the piece by reworking various features appropriate to the particular mode, i.e., by adding transition elements or varying the introduction or by shaping an argument to convince a specific audience.

Obviously, this kind of revision is major and goes far beyond the usual editing and copying over that passes for revision. Substantive revision requires input from an audience, i.e., a response group or writing partner or the teacher in a conference. Moreover, this kind of revision comes only when writers have the time and encouragement to refine pieces. And though it is sometimes difficult to give over large chunks of time to polishing a text, it is only this kind of revision which develops real writing ability; so teachers must make substantive revision a goal for all students. (See page 46.)

WRITING FOLDERS: A RATIONALE

The writing folder speaks more accurately and eloquently than number grades. The folder is evidence of a student's attempts to grow as a writer through multiple drafts and increasingly challenging topics. It contains tentative beginnings and false starts as well as successes so that a reader may understand how hard it is to write and how long it takes to develop skill.

The folder also can reveal the teacher's goals for student writing development. All a reader has to do is to read through the student writings to see evidence of the teacher's instruction. Where once papers had no introductions, introductions abound; where there were no plots, plots develop, and multiple plots may even appear. As discourse features begin to appear in a student's text, the reader develops a strong sense of the teacher teaching. Peter Johnston says it best:

> "Parents (and administrators) need to have less faith in numbers and be more impressed when a teacher can tell them, without preparation, about children's literacy development and pull out a file documenting specificallly where growth has occurred . . . The ability of teachers to provide accurate process information about specific children on request is a tough test of teacher quality. The only real excuse for failure is too high a teacher-pupil ratio, and that excuse is not a reflection on the teacher or the assessment model, but on social values." (Source: *The Dynamics of Language Learning*, Ed. James K. Squire, Urbana, NCTE, 1987.)

KINDS OF WRITING FOLDERS

Cumulative Folders

Each student will have a folder that contains all the writing (early drafts as well as final copies) he/she has done for English Language Arts for the year. These cumulative folders serve as a record of student writing development and as the basis for assigning language arts report card grades. All entries are dated, though one long piece may be made up of multiple dated entries.

Supplementary Folders

Simply because of the number of papers students write during the course of a year, elementary teachers may choose to supplement each child's cumulative folder with another folder. On a routine basis teachers will transfer pieces from the supplementary folder to the cumulative folder and will document student progress. Teachers may want to use one of the following:

- **Weekly folders** which contain the writings children do each day. (At the end of the week, these writings are transferred to the cumulative folder.)

Or

- **Works in progress** folders which contain early drafts of longer pieces of writing. (As these pieces are revised and edited, both the final draft and the early drafts can be transferred to the cumulative folder.)

Or

- **Other** designations for supplementary folders.

CONTENTS OF THE CUMULATIVE FOLDERS

The kinds of work included in a folder will depend in part on the amount of experience and instruction students have had in writing.

Novice writers may begin their writing development by producing scribbles and drawings. These efforts represent authentic first efforts at writing. These pieces should be dated and placed in the cumulative folders. These scribbles and drawings are especially likely with kindergarten or first grade children, but they may also come from other children who have had no previous writing instruction.

More experienced writers are likely to produce longer pieces of writing, perhaps taking several days to complete a given piece. As students learn to work in peer response groups or as they have conferences with their teacher, their early drafts will show places where the writers have written changes suggested by someone's response to their writing. Note: Longer pieces are to be encouraged. A folder with a relatively small number of pieces that have been revised and edited is the hallmark of an experienced writer; a folder with many short pieces is representative of a novice writer.

To document that these more experienced writers have had daily opportunities to work on their writing, students should date not only the original draft of their writing but also all the revisions they make on the text. When they complete a piece of writing (which may include illustrating it and binding it as a book to be published), the completed piece of writing should also be dated.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

When developmentally and linguistically ready, students should be asked to monitor their own writing ability by doing self-assessments. Self-assessments can be generated by having writers compare a recent piece with an earlier effort. These self-assessments should be done routinely, at least once at the end of the first six weeks and then at three- or four-week intervals throughout the year. These student self-assessments of writing ability can be the focus for teacher/student evaluation conferences.

The following self-assessments were written by third-grade students at S. S. Dillow Elementary School. The samples are end-of-the-year papers and so are more complex than earlier efforts. All students in the class from which these writing samples were drawn conference routinely with their teacher. During the conference, they do a verbal self-assessment while the teacher jots down notes that serve as the basis for the weekly documentation. Hence, the writers practice self-assessment orally, and they become very competent at evaluating their strengths and weaknesses in their written self-assessments. Notice, especially, the fact that the students are comfortable in their use of such terms as introduction and conclusion, that they can identify by name various modes, and that they are aware of various writer strategies, i.e., do not "jump around" when they try to organize a description.

My first descriptive I wrote was the worst I ever wrote. I had no introduction, misspelled words, and no ending except The End. I jumped around and only wrote short pages. But I've gotten much better, because I have everything I need now in my descriptive. Like I have endings that tie up with my introductions and write 3 to 6 pages. I made an 4 on teams this year because I had good details and other things. Now I can edit my own writing papers and I can help other people with editting their writing papers.

When I began writing expressive narratives it was not very good because I had several misspelled words, few details, and lot's more things. Now I have lot's of details, great introductions, great time clue words, and great settings. Well this is everything I have to say about my descriptive writing and expressive narrative for this year. Next year I need to work harder on putting more details in my settings.

At the beginng of the year I was terrad writer. In my descriptive I had no introdutions. Now I have an okay introductions. I had half a pg on my discritive. Now when I write a discritive I have a full pg. I had misspelledwords. Now I hardly have misspelled words. I skiped about. Now I follow a pattern.
I did not use location word. Now I use location words. I need to inprove on my hand writing. At the beginning of the year my narrtives were the worst I eaver saw in my life. I had no introductions. Now I have a lot of introdutions. I put my letters close together. Now I put space in my words. I had misspelled words. Now I spelled my words corectly.
I used to write slopy. But now I write real neat. I had one pg story. But now I have 5 or 9 pgs. I did not have trasiana/ words. Now I often us trasial words. I had no setting. Now I have a Setting. I had no detail. Now in my story I have pleanty of dettial. I left the reader danling. Now I don't leave the reader dangling. I made a 3 on my teams writing test.

I have really improved in my writing. I used to write a 7 line page, but now I write 3 pages or more. I give an introduction and a conclusion. I love writing because it makes me think of ideas. This year I made a 4 and a 999 on Teams in writing.

Since I've been in third grade has shown me more writing skills. At the beginning of the year I left out things that I don't leave out now. I also know how to help someone edit a writing. I need more practice on describing my settings.

In my first descriptive I jumped around, had no introduction, no conclusion, or any location words. I just gave a lot of details. But now I do all of that.

DOCUMENTING STUDENT WRITING

Within the first two weeks of a student's entering a class, teachers should have the student produce a draft. This initial piece should be carefully analyzed to determine the student's writing strengths. The teacher should record what the writer knows, everything from knowledge of sound/letter correlation to knowledge of features appropriate to specific modes (introduction, transition elements, etc.).

This first analysis is critical as it establishes the foundation for the writer's instructional program.

Based on this first analysis, the teacher should work with the writer to establish within the context of course objectives some reasonable goals and hold the writer responsible for meeting the goals.

Generally speaking, teachers should analyze one piece of student writing per week. Initially, the teacher should simply analyze a representative work, not the best, not the worst. As soon as students are capable of selecting a best piece, however, this best piece should be the work that the teacher analyzes and documents. (Note: Teachers are encouraged to involve students in this analysis by asking each writer to choose a best paper for the week and then to explain what makes it outstanding. The writer's analysis of his/her piece should guide the teacher's analysis.) (See page 29.)

If the teacher has been working with the writer on a specific feature of composition, i.e., the use of transition words, the teacher should begin the analysis by looking to see if the text contains transition words. Hence, the weekly analysis should reveal to the teacher whether or not students are internalizing instruction.

The teacher who works with more accomplished writers may not have an array of papers from which to make a choice, especially if a student has worked four or five days on a single piece. In this situation, the teacher should ask the writer to establish the strong points in the piece and focus the analysis around these features.

Documentation of student writing need not be lengthy.

It is sufficient merely to record the date of the piece and jot down a few notes about any strengths/features/skills which this piece contains that previous pieces did not contain. (Following are samples of teacher documentation. They are initial assessments and so are more lengthy than routine assessments.)

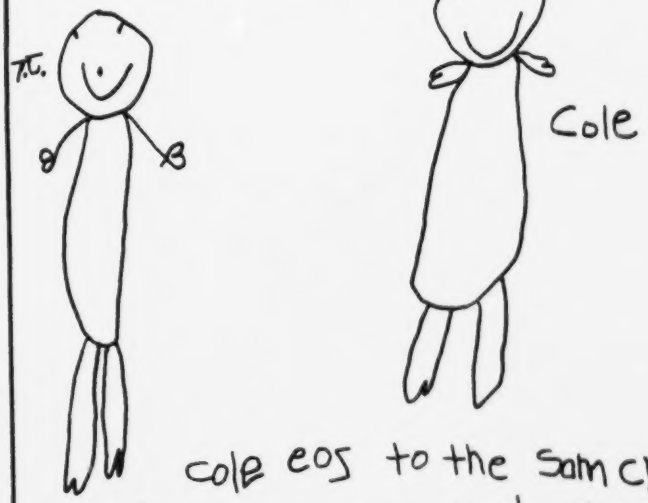
It is not appropriate for the teacher to make corrections on the paper or to assign a grade unless that paper is a final draft and the student has previously worked on the piece with a response group and the teacher has made explicit the basis for the grade and has provided instruction to ensure that the writer understands those things for which he/she will be held accountable.

Kindergarten

Carolyn J2-2

1/25/88

- left to right progression
- top to bottom progression
- aware of capital/lower case letters
- aware of periods
- spacing between words
- recognizes letters go in same order as sounds heard in a word
- others are able to read
- controls topic



cole eos to the Sam cLas.
I LiC to PLa Meth My Frieds
TL and Cole.
ME TO and We thra LiC to PLaMe
dr bast Frens

WR-14

2nd grade

1/27/87

Letter to Pen Pal

- Salutation, aware of apostrophy (contractions),
- opening sentence....
- I like because, 1 or 2 supporting detail sent.
- indents
- complete sentences
- capitalization
- punctuation
- Capital I
- Closing
- letter format
- uses inventile spelling (lrning, becus, tiyer)

9-29-87

Dear Carrie and Esther,

I do fun things at school. I Like recess becus we play on the tiyer and on the brige. We call it the play grown. I Like P.E. becus we play games and do exercise. If is fun to do all this fun things and we have a gold fish and a giney pig We get to fed both of them.

I Like spellin becus it helps me spell so I can help others but we lirn lots of things and I think your names are very nice My name is Suzanna I hope you like me too like I like you. I Like to do F.t.S. We have to read and say the anwsers and I Like S.R.A. becous We get to read and say the answer and after that we can mack a book and tern it in and now we'r Lrning about mammals. Ther are lots of mammals.

your penpal,
Suzanna

5th grade

10/23/88

"The Unlucky Day"

intro., One day....

conflict - 4 events, one conflict flows to another

character thoughts - "class was mad at me," "I thought oh great!"

time sequence .. when I woke up, when I got back to my seat, when I got home.

sense of voice ... through actions and events

Shanna 10-20-88

The unlucky day

One day when I woke up I had gum in my hair because I had gone to sleep with gum in my mouth. I had to get the peanut butter and get the gum out of my hair. I finally got the gum out of my hair so I went to school. I was walking up the stairs and I tripped on my shoestring and bounced down the stairs plus I got in trouble for skipping stairs on the way down. Then I got back up to the room I noticed I forgot my homework. So the teacher gave us a twenty minute lecture to the whole class the class was mad at me because it was all my fault. Then at math I dropped my pencil and went to go pick it up. Four kids stepped on me and three kids kicked me while I was crawling on the floor trying to find my pencil. When I got back to my seat I started working again. When school was out I had to walk home when I got home I found a note it said: Shanna please make supper I will be home at 6:30 pm Mom

I thought Oh great! So I went in the house and made supper. By time mom and dad got home I was sound asleep. Supper was already made so they just let me sleep. I didn't wake up until 6:30 the next morning and my unlucky day was over.

3rd Grade

Monica
9-15-88

Introduction - Una vez...
Aware of capitalization and punctuation
Details
Sequence
Complete sentences
uses inventive spelling (tortagas, a ber, ay)
Closing

Una vez fui a ber los animales y un chango andaba ay por todos el parque. y los elelefante andaba comiendo. y todos los animales me parecieron bien.
Tambien vi al tigre y andaba ay acostado. unos patitos andaban nadando. y unas tortagas tambien estaban en el agua. Habia muchos animales en el parque y todos estaban aciendo algo.
Yo me rei mucho mirando a todo los animales y quiero voluer otra vez a visitar todos ellos.

5th Grade

El Monstruo

Introduction - Un dia ...

story line

Conflict / Resolution

Details / Elaboration
- cuello largo
- cabezas redondas ...

Sequence of events

sense of voice ...through actions and events

Complete sentences

Capitalization

Punctuation

Juan
5-22-88

El monstruo

Un dia sali de mañana para ir a mi casa y vi un niño con tres cabezas y lo lleve a la escuela Todos los niños me preguntaron su nombre y les dije que le puse el nombre de Trilope. Hicimos un plan para asustar a la maestra y para no tener clases ese dia.

El tenia cuerpo humano, cuello largo cabezas redondas con un solo ojo. sus cabellos eran de color rojo y se veia como un monstruo de verdad ya que era horrible, con sus dejas grandes, y ojos grandes, y ojos medianos. los dientes eran salgos y la nariz picuda, y el cuello era de girafa.

Por fin llego la maestra y salio el monstruo a saludarla y la maestra lo vio y empezo a gritar a-a-a-a-a-a-a-a. El monstruo empezo a correr desesperado hasta llegar a la oficina donde estaba el director y otras gentes de la sociedad. El director nos suspendio por un año de la escuela. Todos empezamos a llorar. En las noches el monstruo empezaba a rugir como un feroz leon ar. ar. ar. ar. ar. No dejaba de parar hasta el dia siguiente.

Un dia lo llevamos a la feria y se metio a la casa de los espantos y como es comun se nos tubo que perder. ya teniamos con el un largo mes hasta que llego la hora. Hice un instrumento con lata, tubo y un foco y llame a los padres del niño monstruo por telefono. Finalmente llegaron sus padres una noche con una nave espacial que tenia tanta luz que el gallo del vecino empezo a cantar. la nave se alejo y desaparecio como la luz. Asi de rapida! El problema se acabo. Al otro año nos advirtieron de no traer mas monstruos a la escuela.

WR-18

CHECK SHEETS

Check sheets may be used as a form of documentation only if the list of features is appropriate specifically to the developmental and linguistic level of a particular class and to the essential elements for that grade level. In order to develop such a list, teachers should analyze the first writings done by students at the beginning of the year and then make out a list of skills to reflect the range of abilities with which children begin the school year. For instance, within a single classroom there may be students who draw pictures and use random letters to represent written text and there may also be students who can actually draft rudimentary narratives. Hence, the list of skills must acknowledge the starting points of at least these two developmentally different novice writers.

The following may be used by teachers who prefer check sheets rather than notation. **Insert A** establishes writer goals for kindergarten writers. These are not six-week goals, and it may well take the writer several years to become proficient in terms of these goals.

Insert B establishes goals for all writers (whole class goals) for the first six week grading period, grades one through five. These goals are very general and may serve to develop student fluency while classroom procedures are being established.

Writer goals for the remaining six-week period tied to the district objectives for each grade level follow Insert B. Goals I, II, and III are designed to apply to all students in the class; goals four and IV reflect the range of skills to be addressed at specific grade levels. Teachers should individualize goals IV and V. Only one skill should be stressed for each of these two goals per six weeks. Teachers must remember that writing development is a highly individual matter so some modification of these check lists will be necessary for students.

WHOLE CLASS WRITING GOALS

Kindergarten

I. Takes Writing Seriously

- stages of the writing process as individually appropriate
- folder maintenance
  --care
  --proper sequence of activities
  --name and date on work
- responsible actions

II. Takes Risks

- increases fluency
- uses inventive spelling with initial drafts
- internalizes and begins to generate story structures through a variety of media such as drama, art, music, and storytelling
- addresses purposes/modes
  --sequencing of events (beginning, middle, endings)
  --entertaining
  --informing

III. Good Response Partner

- respect
- "What I like best"
- "I want to know more about"

Insert A

WHOLE CLASS WRITING GOALS

First Six Weeks
Grades One-Five

Introduced | Uses Consistently

I. Takes Writing Seriously

- stages of the writing process
  --prewriting, mapping
  --sequence (beginning, middle, end)
  --transition words: first, next, then, after that, later, finally, last
  --dialogue
  --stay on topic
  --detail
  --title
  --sharing (large/small groups, partners)
  --revising
  --conferencing
  --editing
  --publishing

- folder maintenance
  --care
  --proper sequence of activities
  --name and date on work

- responsible actions

___ (20)

II. Takes Risks

- increases fluency
- uses inventive spelling with initial drafts
- uses personal experiences and literature as springboards or models for writing
- drafts a variety of compositions
  --audiences
  --formal
  --informal
  --addresses purposes/modes
  --expressive narrative
  --informative narrative
  --informative descriptive

___ (20)

III. Revises

- considers response partners'questions and comments
- adds to paper and rearranges information and ideas

___ (20)

Insert B

		Introduced	Uses Consistently
IV.	Good Response Partner • respect • "What I like best" • "I want to know more about"	___ (20)	
V.	Generates Appropriate Topics	___ (20)	
	Total	___ (100)	

STUDENT WRITING GOALS

_____ Six Weeks
Grade One

	Introduced	Uses Consistently

I. Takes Writing Seriously

- stages of the writing process
  --prewriting, mapping
  --sequence (beginning, middle, end)
  --transition words: first, next, then, after that, later, finally, last
  --dialogue
  --stay on topic
  --detail
  --title
  --sharing (large/small groups, partners)
  --revising
  --conferencing
  --editing
  --publishing

- folder maintenance
  --care
  --proper sequence of activities
  --name and date on work

- responsible actions

___ (20)

II. Takes Risks

- increases fluency
- uses inventive spelling with initial drafts
- uses personal experiences andliterature as springboards or models for writing
- drafts a variety of compositions
  --audiences
    --formal
    --informal
  --address purposes/modes
    --expressive narrative
    --informative narrative
    --informative descriptive
  --various literary forms
  --write simple correspondence

___ (20)

III. Revises

Introduced	Uses Consistently

- considers response partner's question and comments
- adds to paper and rearrange information and ideas

(After the first six weeks or as the initial whole-class expectations and procedures are mastered, select developmentally appropriate expectations for each student based upon individual range of abilities. Individual expectations will be modified each six weeks as students demonstrate consistent use of skills within written context.)

IV. Individual Skills (Mechanics)*

- progression left/right, top/bottom
- word spacing between words
- punctuation--periods, exclamation point, question mark, etc.
- capitalization
  --beginning sentences
  --greeting and closing of a letter
  --story titles
  --days
  --months
  --proper nouns

___ (20)

V. Individual Syntax Expectations*

- sentence structure-variety
- subject/plural form of regular nouns
- regular verb forms

___ (20)

Total ___ (100)

*Student will focus on one skill listed under Goal IV and one skill listed under Goal V each six weeks.

STUDENT WRITING GOALS

_____ Six Weeks
Grade Two

	Introduced	Uses Consistently
I. Takes Writing Seriously		
• stages of the writing process		
--prewriting, mapping		
--sequence (beginning, middle, end)		
--transition words: first, next, then, after that, later, finally, last		
--dialogue		
--stay on topic		
--detail		
--title		
--sharing (large/small groups, partners)		
--revising		
--conferencing		
--editing		
--publishing		
• folder maintenance		
--care		
--proper sequence of activities		
--name and date on work		
• responsible actions		
___ (20)		
II. Takes Risks		
• increases fluency		
• uses inventive spelling with initial drafts		
• uses personal experiences and literature as springboards or models for writing		
• drafts a variety of compositions		
--audiences		
--formal		
--informal		
--addresses purposes/modes		
--expressive narrative		
--informative narrative		
--informative descriptive		
--various literary forms		
--write simple correspondence		
___ (20)		

III. Revises first and/or subsequent drafts

Introduced	Uses Consistently

- considers response partner's questions and comments
- adds to paper and rearrange information and ideas
- rewrites to include a variety of word choices

After the first six weeks or as the initial whole-class expectations and procedures are mastered, select developmentally appropriate expectations for each student based upon individual range of abilities. Individual expectations will be modified each six weeks as students demonstrate consistent use of skills within written context.

___ (20)

IV. Individual Skills (Mechanics)*

- punctuation
- capitalization
- spelling

___ (20)

V. Individual Syntax Expectations*

- sentence structure-variety
- subject/verb agreement
- irregular and "to be" verb forms
- singular/plural forms of regular nouns

___ (20)

Total ___ (100)

*Student will focus on one skill listed under Goal IV and one skill listed under Goal V each six weeks.

STUDENT WRITING GOALS

_____ Six Weeks
Grade Three

	Introduced	Uses Consistently
I. Takes Writing Seriously		
• stages of the writing process		
--prewriting, mapping		
--sequence (beginning, middle, end)		
--transition words: first, next, then, after that, later, finally, last		
--dialogue		
--stay on topic		
--detail		
--title		
--sharing (large/small groups, partners)		
--revising		
--conferencing		
--editing		
--publishing		
• folder maintenance		
--care		
--proper sequence of activities		
--name and date on work		
• responsible actions		
___ (20)		
II. Takes Risks		
• increases fluency		
• uses inventive spelling with initial drafts		
• uses personal experiences and literature as springboards or models for writing		
• drafts a variety of compositions		
--audiences		
--formal		
--informal		
• addresses purposes/modes		
--expressive narrative		
--informative narrative		
--informative descriptive		
--various literary forms		
--writes simple correspondence		
___ (20)		

	Introduced	Uses Consistently
III. Revises First and/or Subsequent Drafts • considers response partner's questions and comments • adds to paper and rearranges information and ideas • rewrites to include a variety of word choices	___ (20)	
(After the first six weeks or as the initial whole-class expectations and procedures are mastered, select developmentally appropriate expectations for each student based upon individual range of abilities. Individual expectations will be modified each six weeks as students demonstrate consistent use of skills within written context.)		
IV. Individual Skills (Mechanics)* • punctuation • capitalization • spelling	___ (20)	
V. Individual Syntax Expectations* • sentence structure-variety • subject/verb agreement • irregular and "to be" verb forms • singular/plural forms of regular nouns	___ (20)	
Total	___ (100)	

*Student will focus on one skill listed under Goal IV and one skill listed under Goal V each six weeks.

STUDENT WRITING GOALS

_____ Six Weeks
Grade Four

	Introduced	Uses Consistently
I. Takes Writing Seriously		
• stages of the writing process		
--prewriting, mapping		
--sequence (beginning, middle, end)		
--transition words: first, next, then, after that, later, finally, last		
--dialogue		
--stay on topic		
--detail		
--title		
--sharing (large/small groups, partners)		
--revising		
--conferencing		
--editing		
--publishing		
• folder maintenance		
--care		
--proper sequence of activities		
--name and date on work		
• responsible actions		
___ (20)		
II. Takes Risks		
• increases fluency		
• uses inventive spelling with initial drafts only		
• uses personal experiences andliterature as springboards or models for writing		
• drafts a variety of compositions		
--addresses audiences		
--formal		
--informal		
--addresses purposes/modes		
--expressive narrative		
--informative narrative		
--informative descriptive		
--informative classification		
--persuasive descriptive		
--various correspondence formats		
___ (20)		

III. Revises First and/or Subsequent Drafts

	Introduced	Uses Consistently
• considers response partner's questions and comments • adds to paper and rearranges information and ideas • rewrites to include word choice variety • evaluates revisions made by self and others		

___ (20)

(After the first six weeks or as the initial whole-class expectations and procedures are mastered, select developmentally appropriate expectations for each student based upon individual range of abilities. Individual expectations will be modified each six weeks as students demonstrate consistent use of skills within written context.)

IV. Individual Skills (Mechanics)*

- punctuation
- capitalization
- spelling and word formation
- paragraph structure

___ (20)

V. Individual Syntax Expectations*

- sentence structure-variety
- subject/verb agreement
- irregular and "to be" verb forms
- singular/plural forms of regular nouns

___ (20)

Total ___ (100)

*Student will focus on one skill listed under Goal IV and one skill listed under Goal V each six weeks.

STUDENT WRITING GOALS

_____ Six Weeks
Grade Five

	Introduced	Uses Consistently

I. Takes Writing Seriously

- stages of the writing process
  - --prewriting, mapping
  - --sequence (beginning, middle, end)
  - --transition words: first, next, then, after that, later, finally, last
  - --dialogue
  - --stay on topic
  - --detail
  - --title
  - --sharing (large/small groups, partners)
  - --revising
  - --conferencing
  - --editing
  - --publishing
- folder maintenance
  - --care
  - --proper sequence of activities
  - --name and date on work
- responsible actions

___ (20)

II. Takes Risks

- increases fluency
- uses invented spelling with initial draft only
- uses personal experiences and literature or writing springboards and models
- drafts a variety of compositions
  - --addresses audiences
    - --formal
    - --informal
  - --addresses purposes/modes
    - --expressive narrative
    - --informative narrative
    - --informative descriptive
    - --informative classificatory
    - --persuasive descriptive
  - --various correspondence formats

___ (20)

III. Revises First and/or Subsequent Drafts

Introduced	Uses Consistently

- considers response partner's questions and comments
- adds to paper and rearranges information and ideas
- rewrites to include a variety of word choices
- evaluate revisions made by self and other

___ (20)

(After the first six weeks or as the initial whole-class expectations and procedures are mastered, select developmentally appropriate expectations for each student based upon individual range of abilities. Individual expectations will be modified each six weeks as students demonstrate consistent use of skills within written context.)

IV. Individual Skills (Mechanics)*

- punctuation
- capitalization
- spelling and word formation
- paragraph structure

___ (20)

V. Individual Syntax Expectations*

- sentence structure-variety
- subject/verb agreement
- pronoun/antecedent agreement
- singular/plural verb forms
- irregular and "to be" verb forms
- word usage (appropriate form)
- adjectives/adverbs/pronouns

___ (20)

Total ___ (100)

*Student will focus on one skill listed under Goal IV and one skill listed under Goal V each six weeks.

WRITING GOALS

The following are examples of whole class (for first six weeks) and individual student writing goals (for following six-weeks periods). These may be duplicated and stapled in individual student folders so that the writers are aware of their goals.

MY WRITING GOALS
First Six Weeks

Student _____

(For Student's Working Folder)

I. Takes Writing Seriously

Notes/Comments:

___ (20)

II. Takes Risks

Notes/Comments:

___ (20)

III. Revises

Notes/Comments:

___ (20)

IV. Good Response Partner

Notes/Comments:

___ (20)

My Writing Goals (continued)

V. Generates Appropriate Topics

Notes/Comments:

___ (20)

Total ___ (100)

MY WRITING GOALS

Student _____ **Grade** _____

Six Week Period: 2 3 4 5 6
(Circle as appropriate)

(For Student's Working Folder)

I. Takes Writing Seriously

Notes/Comments

___ (20)

II. Takes Risks

Notes/Comments:

___ (20)

III. Revises

Notes/Comments:

___ (20)

Writing Goals (continued)

IV. Individual Skills (Mechanics)

Notes/Comments:

___ (20)

V. Individual Syntax

Notes/Comments:

___ (20)

Total ___ (100)

GRADING WRITING

A six-week grade in Language Arts/Composition should reflect various expectations based on district goals and objectives:

1. the student's growth as a writer, i.e., growth in terms of the complexity and variety of tasks addressed;

2. the student's willingness to take various numbers of writing tasks through the composing process to evaluation (willingness to revise and edit an appropriate number of pieces);

3. the student's willingness to address deficiencies in terms of individual subskills;

4. the student's mastery of the district goals appropriate to specific grade levels; and

5. the student's willingness to respond thoughtfully to various literary selections.

Number four is problematical. The district objectives specify skills in composition beginning in kindergarten. However, many young students because of developmental differences never internalized various modes of composition and so have no foundation. What this means is that by grade three, a third grade teacher must often address a three-year composition deficiency before he/she can begin instruction on third grade objectives. Hence, much time must be spent introducing students to the procedures for writing process (K-2) and introducing the modes of composition (grades one, two) before real third grade instruction can begin.

Eventually, first graders should be able to draft expressive and informative narratives and second graders should be able to write in these modes and produce informative description as well. Then a third grade teacher could measure performance precisely by requiring students to demonstrate knowledge of the features of each mode and by holding the writers accountable for incorporating appropriate features into their text. Accountability would vary from grade one to grade three only in the degree of syntactic maturity and elaboration evidenced by the writer. Until all students enter a grade with grade level writing proficiency, evaluation in terms of modes will of necessity reflect growth rather than the degree of mastery expected by the state.

Report card grades should reflect such growth during a six-week period.

In order to tie the report card grade to writer goals, teachers should establish a weight of twenty points per goal, and then determine student performance on a scale of 1-20 for each of the five goals. When the class has mastered the initial series of writing goals, new writer goals can be established.

DOCUMENTING INSTRUCTION

The Plan Book and the Grade Book

The Writing Workshop is an on-going instructional program whose goal is the development of writing ability. Central to this program are mini-lessons and teacher/student conferencing.

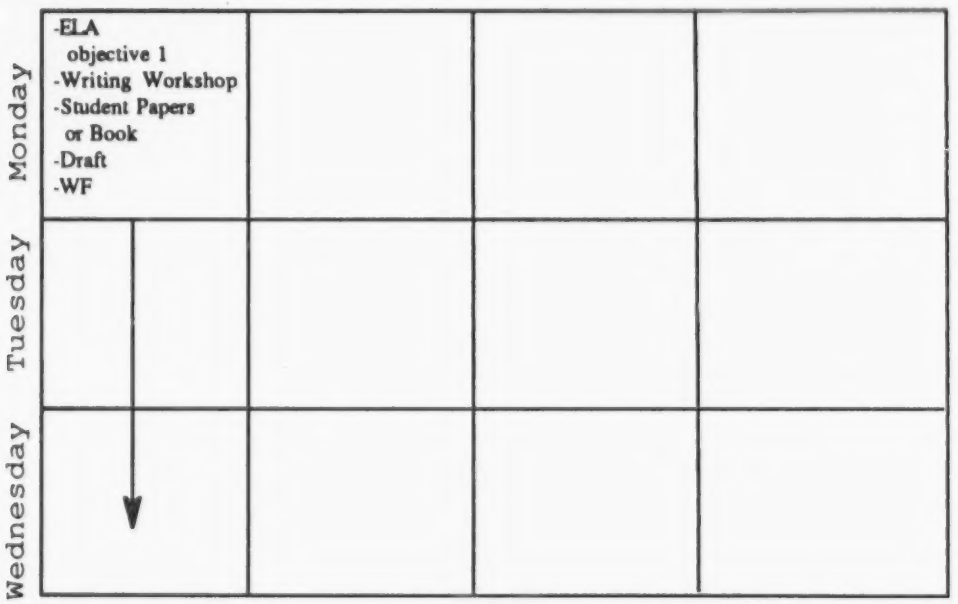
The mini-lesson provides five-ten minutes of whole class instruction at the start of the writing workshop. The purpose of the mini-lesson is to introduce a concept or skill. Teachers are not concerned with whole class mastery of the mini-lesson content since each mini-lesson will be repeated four or five times during the course of the school year and/or supplemented with individualized instruction during conferencing.

The student/teacher conference provides one-on-one instruction so that teachers can remediate or extend student abilities. The conference also focuses on student writing goals and reteaching via the multiple draft process.

In order to show the writing workshop instructional period in a plan book teachers must do the following:

1. cite the English Language Arts objective 1;
2. give the title of the resource(s) used, (where appropriate);
3. describe the activity-writing, responding, revising;
4. refer to the assessment by citing the writing folder.

Sample:



The following represents a sample grade book entry for a three-week span.

Under the Friday column a check (√) is placed beside the student's name to indicate that a writing sample has been analyzed and that there is evidence of student progress and/or a need for a teacher-student conference. The analysis of the student sample may reflect implementation of individual or class goals as well as implementation of or whole class instruction mini-lesson. A √+ or √- may be used in order to indicate the degree of proficiency. During the third week numerical grades which reflect the student's consistent implementation of goals may be entered. (See goals at third week.) Each goal affords a maximum of 20 possible points. Goals one through three are whole-class goals; goals four and five represent individual student goals;

If a three-week grade is required, the total points of the five goals may be entered in a designated column to reflect an interim numeral grade.

THREE WEEK ENTRY

Students	M	T	W	Th	F	M	T	W	Th	F	M	T	W	Th	F	3 Week Total
					Writing sample Analysis					Writing sample Analysis	Class Goal #1	Class Goal #2	Class Goal #3	Stu. Indiv. Goals	Writing sample Analysis	
Adams, B					✔+					✔+	18	20	17	13/17	✔	
All-Saud, N					✔-					✔-©	17	18	16	17/19	✔	
Barnett, W.					✔-					✔-	16	15	14	20/20	✔+	
Davila, M.					✔+					✔+	19	14	16	20/18	✔	
Gomez, H.					✔+					✔+	18	17	18	16/14	✔	
Lee, S.					✔+					✔+	18	17	18	16/14	✔	
Li, C.					✔©					✔	17	19	17	/	✔-	
Mach, G.					✔©					✔	18	18	19	/	✔	
Sexton, H.					✔+					✔©	15	16	20	/	✔	
Trevino, A.					✔-					✔+	19	14	20	/	✔+	

© Indicates need for teacher-student conference as a result of Writing Analysis Entry.

Writing Analysis Entry May Reflect Implementation of:
1) individual/class goals
2) mini-lesson or whole class instruction

A NOTE ON INVENTIVE SPELLING

According to Susan Sowers (*Understanding Writing: Ways of Observing, Learning and Teaching*. Ed Thomas Newkirk and Nancie Atwell. Chelmsford, MA: The Northeast Regionals Exchange, Inc., 1982), errors made in inventive spelling do not interfere with a child's learning to spell correctly. Moreover, these errors are not random; they are systematic.

With inventive spelling:

- Children use names of letters and not just sounds that letters represent (*elephant* would begin with L; *why* would be Y; *bee*, B);
- R and L sounds stand more often as a syllable without a vowel than do other consonants (*ac* for *ankle*; *ovr* for over; *revr* for river);
- Long vowels are spelled more accurately than short vowels because they are spelled as they sound;
- M's and N's before most consonants are not spelled because they are not articulated.

By encouraging inventive spelling, teachers allow learners to become independent writers who have control over what they want to say and who can take responsibility for content. Children generate fluent, powerful writing that says what they mean.

What follows is one teacher's method of addressing spelling. The method is called Independent Spelling Practice (ISP). The spelling activities are quite traditional; the words to be learned in this activity, however, are student-selected.

INDEPENDENT SPELLING PRACTICE (ISP)

As students begin to edit, have them circle words with questionable spellings. After determining the correct spelling of the word, students add it to a running list of words inside their daily folder. Each Monday they are given the opportunity to self-select words to learn from their list.

To internalize the spelling of a word, students need to work with that word for approximately twenty minutes. With ISP, students are alloted twenty minutes to deal with words they want to use in their daily writing.

Because the words have meaning to the children, they remember the conventional spellings long past "test-time" on Friday. (It would be wise to change the ISP activities [see following] occasionally to prevent them from becoming boring.)

INDEPENDENT SPELLING PRACTICE TIMES

MONDAY--Choose your words. Write each word three times.

1. *
2. *
3. *
4. *
5. *
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

*The teacher or students may select five "classroom words" from an ongoing thematic unit of study OR words which appear commonly on the students' running lists.

TUESDAY--Look up your five words in the dictionary. CHECK YOUR SPELLING and then write the first definition.

WEDNESDAY--Put all ten words into alphabetical order.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

THURSDAY--Use each word in a sentence (--word minimum)

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
7.
8.
9.
10.

(Teacher checks as students finish. Students may make a take-home study sheet if they still do not feel confident with the words. Teacher keeps ISP until Friday.)

FRIDAY--Individual Spelling Test
(Partners give each other a test on their individual words. Have the child read each word aloud before giving the test to alleviate the possibility of a child's calling out the wrong word to his/her partner. It is a good idea to make "shields" for each child to hide the partner's ISP behind.) See Spelling Procedures for additional spelling activities.

More Spelling Ideas

Procedure 1:

1. Writing

Revising

Rewriting

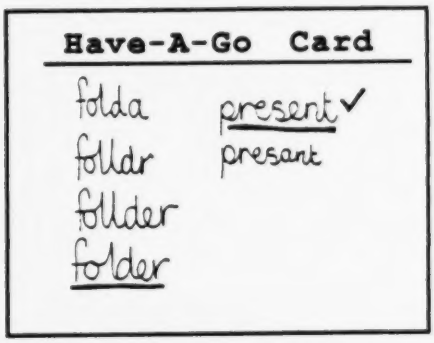
2. The child proof-reads the draft when it is ready for publication. Correct spelling aids communication to the audience.

3. Circle or underline any suspected spelling errors.

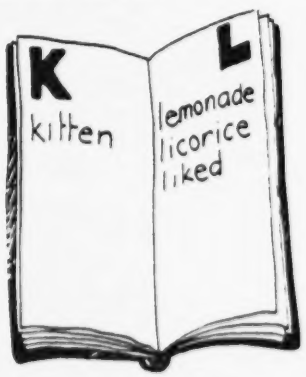
4. (a) Take out a 'Have-a-Go' card.
   (b) Write the word as you think it is spelled.
   (c) Try several spellings.
   (d) Which looks right?
   (e) Check with teacher or another speller.

5. If correct, the child writes the correct spelling in his/her writing writing draft and proceeds.
   If correct:
   (a) Child gets the class dictionary Book of 'Spells.'
   (b) The teacher writes the correct spelling in the dictionary and the child copies it into his/her own word bank.
   (c) Child and teacher talk about the word. Its difficult parts, the sound of word, its visual structure, tricks to remember, its meaning.
   (d) The teacher covers the word. The child writes the word from memory in his or her word book (using the look-cover-write-check method).
   (e) The child then uses the correct spelling of the word in the draft and continues.

4. Have-a-Go-Card

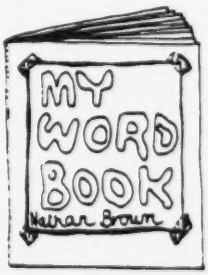


5. (a) Class Book of 'Spells.' Words are written in alphabetical order, a page for each letter. The book is left at the Writing Materials Center.



5. (b) The front half is a dictionary. The back half contains personal lists of words:

- like visual structure
- like meaning
- antonymns
- sounds, etc.



Source: *Write On: A Conference Approach to Writing*, Jo-Ann Parry, David Hornsby, Portsmouth, NH. Heinemann, 1985.

Procedure 2:

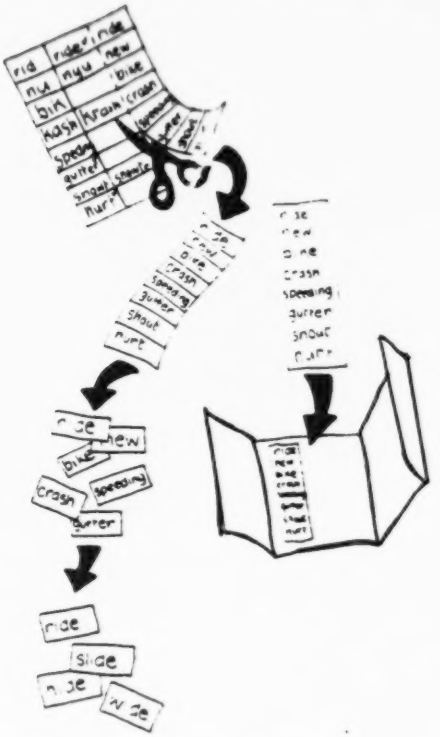
This procedure is more structured but should still be negotiated with certain children so that is suits their needs.

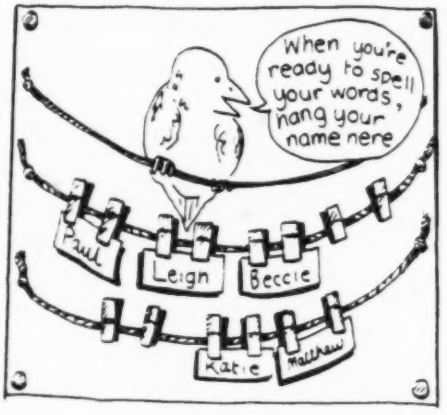
1. Children use 'Have-a-Go cards with certain number of columns and lines, e.g.:
   (a) Years 5-6 = 4 columns, 15 lines
   (b) Years 1-3 = 3 columns, 8 lines

2. When the third column (filled in by the teacher, parent or tutor) is complete, it is cut off. The child makes a second copy of what is now a personal spelling list.

3. The strip from the original card can be cut up into word cards (for games, word banks, word sorts, etc.). The second strip can be pasted into a book with flaps for the look-cover-write-check routine. Individual word cards can also be used to commence word families if certain children benefit from repeated spelling patterns or clusters.

4. When individual children have spent time working with their words and are confident they know them, they can indicate that they are ready to be tested. One way of indicating readiness for testing is to place the personal spelling list on a clip board for testing, or to have children hang their names on a display board.

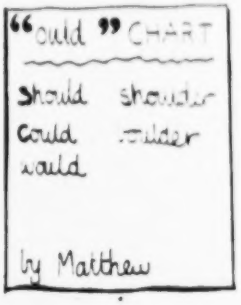




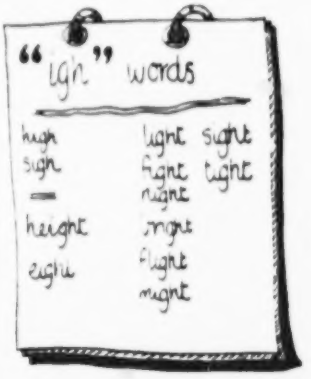
Classroom Spelling Resources

Word walls/charts

These are usually displayed and used for reference and to check 'Have-a-Go' cards. They are added to by individual children.



When the chart no longer needs to be displayed, it can be added to a ring-bound book.

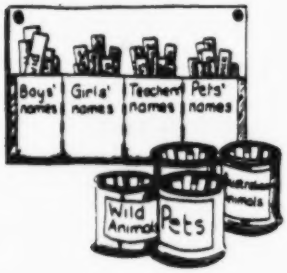


Word Banks (class and/or individual)

Here are two storage ideas:

Topic lists/books

These are often linked to social studies, science, or children's literature.



Dictionaries:

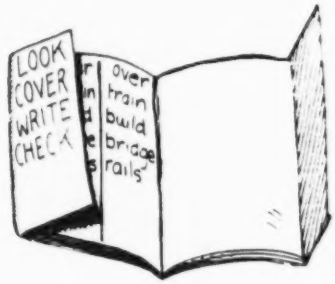
As well as class and individual dictionaries it is important that children have access to, and use, a wide range of published dictionaries.

Spelling 'Books'

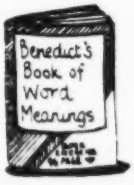
These develop children's knowledge of relationships between sounds and letters.

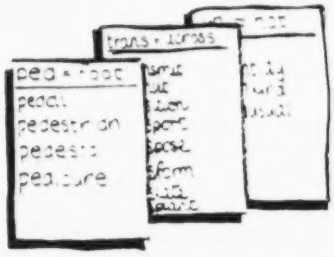
Sample pages for a child's spelling book.

Books in this format (i.e., with flaps) help the look-over-write-check procedure. This develops visual memory of spelling patterns.



Books of word meanings develop the meanings of words and word parts. This includes prefixes, suffixes, compound words and contractions.





TRANSFER OF FOLDERS

At the end of each school year the classroom teacher should determine (preferably with some input from the writer) which pieces should go on to theteacher next year and which the writer should take home. What is recommended is that six pieces go to the next year teacher: two the writer is particularly pleased with, one piece written early on, one late year piece, one late year self-assessment, and one piece the teacher feels is fairly representative of what the writer produces routinely. All of the other pieces may go home with the writer. Every three years, cumulative folders should go through a winnowing out process. That is, at the close of grades two, five, eight, and eleven teachers should review the contents of the folder with the writer and determine which pieces should be discarded and which remain in the folder.

The criteria guiding this decision might include the writer's preference for a particular piece or a teacher's judgment about how a certain piece represents most accurately the writer's day-to-day performance. Other suggested criteria might include a particularly effective example of TEAMS mode; a particularly insightful self-assessment; a highly creative effort; a turning point piece; a piece reflecting a recurring theme; etc.

It is vital to engage the writer in the winnowing out effort since the folder represents the writer.

Hopefully, by discarding pieces every three years, we can keep folders manageable. At the close of grades two, five, eight, and eleven, the number of pieces going to the next year teacher should not exceed ten.

In case of student transfer, the folder should accompany the student's cumulative records to the receiving school.

WHAT WRITING FOLDERS SHOW AMONG STUDENTS WHO FAILED TEAMS

A review of writing folders drawn from a random sample of Fort Worth students who failed the 1988-1989 writing sample revealed the following:

Students who failed the writing sample . . .

- generated fewer pieces of writing,
- revised few if any pieces of writing,
- failed to finish an adequate number of pieces,
- wrote primarily in one mode, rather than attempting a range of modes,
- had problems with sound/letter correlations,
- often did not meet essential elements in terms of writing abilities, and/or
- often produced very short pieces or pieces that rambled almost incoherently.

Among the folders analyzed, the average number of pieces generated by students who failed the writing sample over the entire year was less than thirty; the average number of revisions among these pieces, three. By contrast, folders drawn from students who scored a three or four on the writing sample showed that on the average, these students generated fifty-two pieces during the school year and produced multiple drafts on sixteen of these pieces.

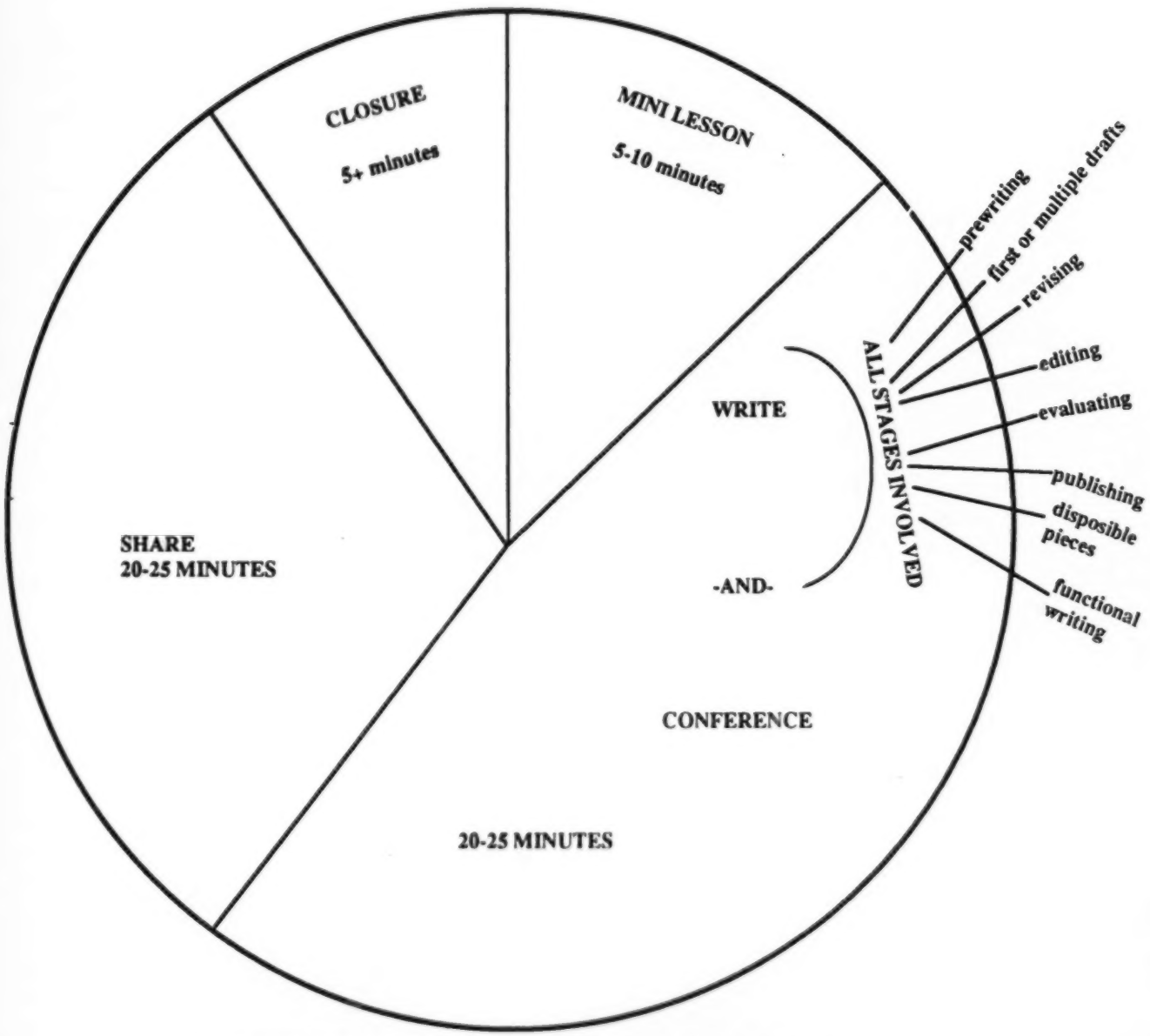
Note: It is by causing students to revise and edit that the subskills of grammar and usage are taught. Students who do not edit and revise may never learn the subskills of spelling, punctuation, and usage.

Implications. . .

- All students must be afforded the opportunity to write on a daily basis.
- All students must revise a significant number of pieces.
- Students must be afforded the time to polish finished pieces of writing.
- Students should be expected to draft in an array of modes.
- Students who are poor spellers should be taught sound/letter correlations regardless of their grade level.
- Students who are not on grade level developmentally or who produce very short or very incoherent pieces should still be expected to go through the writing process working with partners or in response groups. These students, however, should have individual developmentally appropriate expectations and be pulled out of language arts class as seldom as possible.

POSSIBLE
DAILY CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION

WRITING BLOCK



ONE-HOUR BLOCK . . .Adjust Segments daily as necessary . . .

ESSENTIALS:

- **Time**
- **Choice**
- **Support**

SCHEDULING POSSIBILITY
INTEGRATED LANGUAGE ARTS BLOCK

30 minutes **WHOLE GROUP SHARED READING EXPERIENCES:**

15 minutes Story Read Aloud

10 minutes Discussion/Questioning/Response

5-10 minutes Direct Skills Instruction in Context of Reading

30 minutes **SELF-SELECTED READING/READING PROJECTS**

TEACHER CONFERENCES/2 READING GROUPS
(Recordkeeping)

10 minutes **MINI-LESSON/DIRECT WRITING INSTRUCTION**

40 minutes **WRITE/CONFERENCE/SHARE**

10 minutes **CLOSE**

ADDENDUM

A PRESCRIPTION FOR A SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM

Good Writers

An effective program that treats writing as a process regards the act of writing as an interrelated series of steps including prewriting, writing, responding, editing, publishing. While not all children may become professional writers, all children of all ages can become better writers through cooperation between the home and the schools.

To help all children become better writers, parents should:

- read daily to their preschool and primary children in order to increase the children's vocabulary and sense of writing style;
- talk with their children to develop an awareness of language patterns because the basis of good writing is good talk;
- encourage older children to spend more time reading in order to enhance their awareness of how language works and to enrich their realms of writing experience;
- praise their children's efforts at writing and resist focusing on error to the exclusion of celebrating success.

To help all children become better writers, teachers should:

- devote more instructional time to writing, being sure to provide for prewriting activities, multiple drafts, revisions, and sharing of finished work;
- use fewer workbooks and skill sheets, focusing instead on teaching grammar and mechanics through writing;
- recognize that students should write in a variety of forms--letters, journals, essays--for different audiences and purposes and that instruction needs to be provided for each aspect;
- provide a classroom atmosphere where children write freely and frequently without self-consciousness;
- help children develop a strong sense of authorship and a sense of community among other students/writers;
- make initial writing experiences meaningful to writers by providing response groups where students share their work with others, thereby allowing students the opportunity to talk about their writing as it develops;
- use a total language experience approach to learning so that listening, speaking, reading, and writing are equally meaningful;
- focus on developing fine motor skills, oral language, story telling, letter awareness, and expression, through drawing and writing as a common means of communication;
- employ various means of assessing students' writing;
- see that students spend more time writing in order to develop fluency and other writing skills with the expectation that they will later attain mastery of form and correctness;
- help students to develop a sense of themselves as writers and to realize that a finished piece of writing most often goes through several revisions;
- recognize that young children prefer to write their own stories and that they can read their own invented spelling more readily than the teacher's writing.

To help all students become better writers, schools should:

- maintain well-stocked and well-managed libraries rich with classic and contemporary children's literature;

A Prescription for a Successful Program (continued)

- support positive writing experiences such as inviting guest writers to speak and providing funds for the formal publication of students' writings;
- encourage writing as a mode of learning in all disciplines and encourage writing across the curriculum;
- make available to teachers in all disciplines high quality training in the strategies of implementing writing as process;
- provide quality instruction in writing for all students.

Sources:

Handbook for Planning and Effective Writing Programs. Sacramento: California State Department of Education, 1981.
How to Help Your Child Become a Better Writer. National Council of Teachers of English.
Reading Newsletter. December 1985/January 1986, FWISD.

Melissa

One Child's Progress

Lucy McCormick Calkins explains "that through closely observing one child's growth in writing, we'll learn to respect each child's growth in writing" (*Lessons From a Child*, Portsmouth, N. H.: Heinemann, 1983, p. 7). With this in mind, I introduce Melissa in the hope that a look at her development throughout her kindergarten year will provide insight for working with and nurturing other young writers.

Melissa started to school with much the same sense of anxiety and curiosity as most other five year olds. For the first entry in her writing journal Melissa wrote Figure 1.

The second day she drew Figure 2 and explained that this was Mrs. Gilbert, her prekindergarten teacher, who taught her all the letters of the alphabet.

(Figure 1)

(Figure 2)

Throughout the month of September, Melissa wrote only letters of the alphabet, short lists of words she noticed in the classroom, or unrelated lines of words she learned from books read aloud in class.

Melissa seemed only to want to reproduce writing she considered *correct*. She was unwilling to risk making mistakes. Realizing the relationship among letters, words, and written communication, she resisted all persuasive attempts to get her to invest herself in writing. Several times, she brought her journal to the teacher

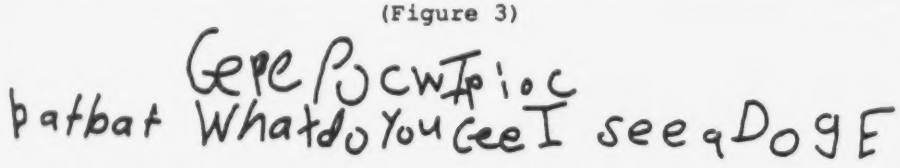
Melissa (continued)

and asked how to spell certain words. Her teacher suggested that Melissa stretch the word out like a rubber band, slowly saying each sound and putting a letter for each sound she heard. Had the teacher begun to spell, even once for her, Melissa would be more hesitant about spelling phonetically.

The class practiced spelling various words they thought of by writing a letter to stand for each sound heard in the word. If hippopotamus became hipopatms, the teacher betrayed no concern. She knew she could trust that eventually, in a year or so, these children would become spellers. Right now, they were attempting fluency.

Eventually, Melissa began to trust herself enough that she at least attempted to write a sentence using letters she chose (Figure 3, line 1), but the trust wasn't yet strong enough, for in the same journal entry (Figure 3, line 2), she reverted to putting letters and words she had learned from modeling a book after Bill Martin's *Brown Bear, Brown Bear*, in which the constant repetition of the phrase, "What do you see? I see a _____ looking at me" is contagious among young children.

(Figure 3)

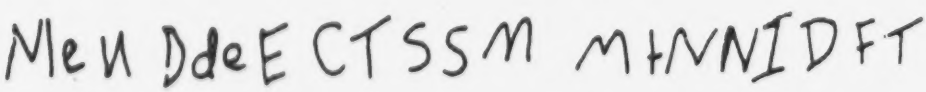


We had our picture made. Bat. Bat. What do you see? I see a doggy.

Between the writing in Figure 1 and that in Figures 2 and 3, Melissa made a breakthrough. She left behind the safety net of copying words and began expressing herself in her own words using phonetic spelling.

She began with a mixture of phonetic spelling, random letters, and letter substitution. Soon, though, she discarded the use of random letters, and, from this point on, she wrote using phonetic spelling only. Her writing indicates that Melissa is in the early phonemic stage where letters are used to represent initial and final sounds of words. (Figure 4)

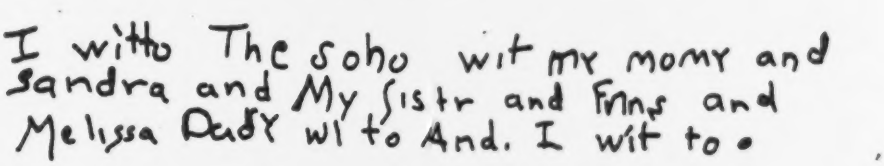
(Figure 4)



Me and my daddy cooked some meat and I didn't eat it.

By the end of November Melissa has made enormous progress. Melissa routinely writes internal sounds represented by letters in addition to initial and final sounds, and she uses spacing intermittently and begins to punctuate (Figure 5).

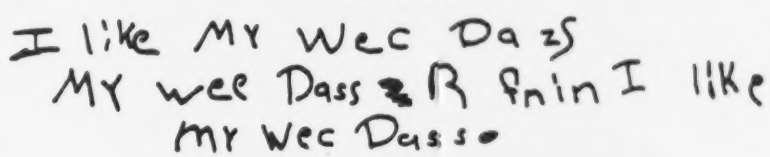
(Figure 5)



I went to the show with my mommy and Sandra and my sister and friends and Melissa. Daddy went too, and I went too.

Throughout the months of November and December, phonetic spelling improves, and Melissa incorporates many sight words from modeling class books after literature to use in her writing. She continues to use word spacing and punctuation (periods, question and exclamation marks). Through she still has not internalized these mechanics, Melissa is experimenting with them. She has begun to use the letter W rather than substituting G or Y for the W. (Figure 6)

(Figure 6)



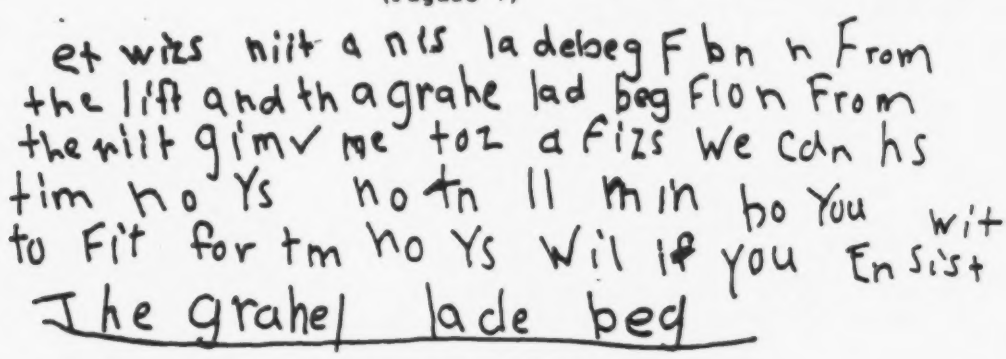
I like my week days. My week days are fun. I like my week days.

Just as Melissa balked for many weeks before risking phonetic spelling above correctness, during most of January and February she continues to pattern stories after the works of her favorite authors before she will risk using her imagination to write stories of her own. After playing the role of Little Red Riding Hood for the school and the P.T.A., she spent several days reproducing the entire play in dialogue. Because she loved *The Grouchy Ladybug*, by Erick Carle, she wrote the following from memory. (Figure 7)

(*See next page*)

Then, she used the technique of asking questions in her writing, just as she had seen in the same book (*The Grouchy Ladybug*). The first time she used this technique was in January, and her classmates loved it and responded to it with much enthusiasm. Thereafter, she used this same technique many times until the end of the school year. Other students adopted it for some of their writings as well. (Figure 8)

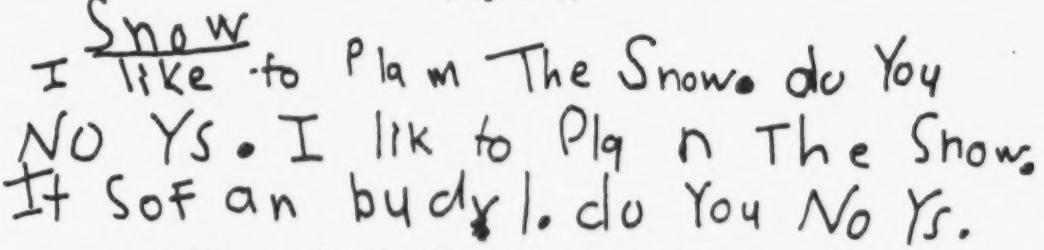
(Figure 7)


et wizs niit a nis la debeg F bn n From
the lift and th a grahe lad beg Flon From
the nilt gimv me toz a fizs We cdn hs
tim no Ys no tn ll min bo You wit
to Fit for tm no Ys Wil if you En Si:st
The grahel lade beg

The Grouchy Ladybug

It was night. A nice ladybug flew in from the the left and then a grouchy ladybug flew in from the right. "Give me those aphids." "We can share them. No?" Yes? "No, they're all mine." "Do you want to fight for them? No? Yes?" "Well, if you insist."

(Figure 8)



I like to play in the snow. Do you? No? Yes?
I like to play in the snow. It is soft and beautiful.
Do you? No? Yes?

In this piece of writing (Figure 8), we can see much to celebrate. She has used a title. She has uniformly used word spacing, she's differentiated between sounds represented by Y and W, and she has used punctuation consistently. What wonderful achievements for a six year old!

As if this rapid progress were not exhilarating enough, in the middle of February, Melissa wrote the first two-page narrative produced in her class. (Figure 9)

Melissa's forward progress was not linear. Instead, like the writing process itself, it was recursive and overlapping. She would practice and exhibit new techniques and abilities in some writings, then revert to early techniques in other pieces.

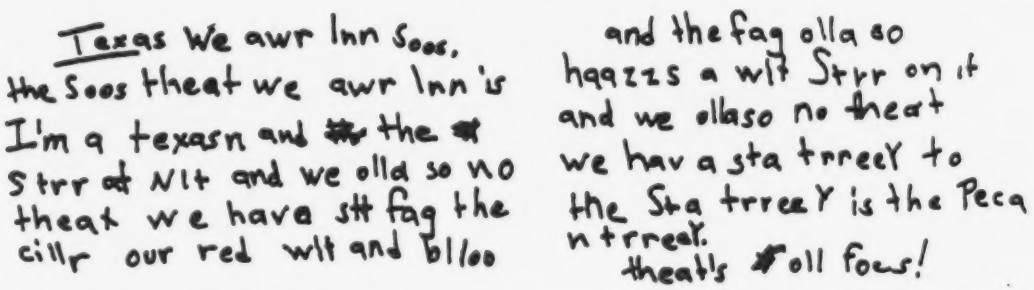
Unlike other students, who would often incorporate suggestions made by friends in their response group into their writing, Melissa would politely listen and explain, then opt to use her own ideas instead. Although she often did pattern after literature, she primarily enjoyed the status of being the first one in class to use an idea. She liked being unique.

Parallel with Melissa's vast, but gradual, improvement in spelling, punctuation, word usage, details, and sequencing was the increase in writing length. Her average writing, until the end of January, contained three sentences. By the end of March, she was producing writings containing an average of five sentences.

By the end of the school year, in May, her four and five page narratives contained up to eighteen sentences. The length of Melissa's writings so impressed the other students that they began to produce lengthy pieces, and long, detailed writings and reports became commonplace for a certain group of students. Some would spend two, three, even four days stapling on more paper to get "my longest book yet." For some age levels this inclination to extend writing is not particularly desirable, but for kindergarten children struggling to become fluent, it is a cause for celebration.

One final piece (Figure 10) done in May shows Melissa's almost meteoric progress and gives promise to her goal to "grow up and be an author and write long, long stories."

(Figure 9)


Texas We awr Inn Soos,
the Soos theat we awr Inn is
I'm a texasn and the
Strr at Nit and we olld so no
theat we have stt fag the
cillr our red wit and bloo
and the fag olla so
haazzs a wit Strr on it
and we ollaso no theat
we hav a sta trreeY to
the Sta trreeY is the Peca
n trreeY.
theatls oll foes!

Texas

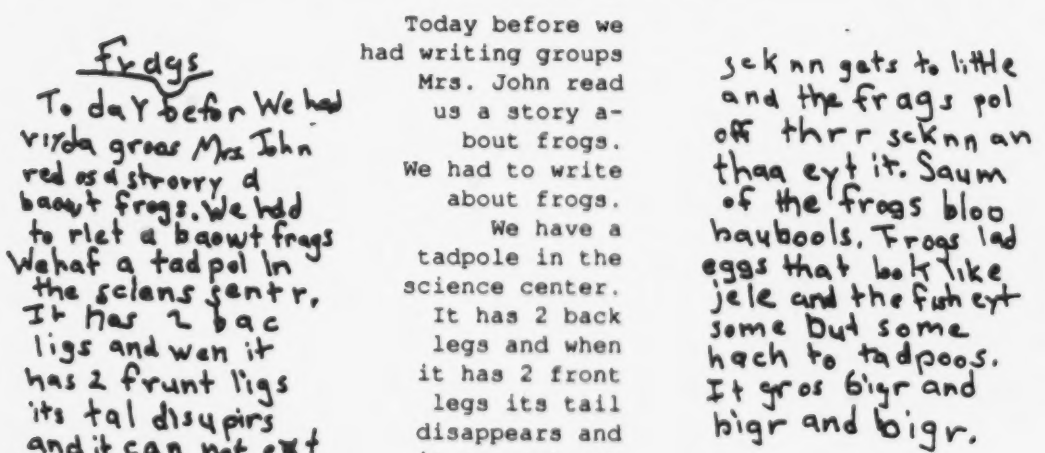
We are learning songs. The songs that we are learning is "I'm a Texan" and "The stars at Night."
And we also know that we have a state flag.
The colors are red, white, and blue.

1

And the flag also has a white star on it.
And we also know that we have a state tree, too.
The state tree is the Pecan tree.
That's all folks!

2

(Figure 10)


Frdgs
To daY befor We had
virda groas Mrs John
red as a strorry d
baout frogs. We had
to rlet a baowt frags
Wehaf a tadpol In
the sclens sentr,
It has 2 bac
ligs and wen it
has 2 frunt ligs
its tal disupirs
and it can not eyt
Wen its maot is
chajn, Then the
Today before we had writing groups Mrs. John read us a story about frogs. We had to write about frogs. We have a tadpole in the science center. It has 2 back legs and when it has 2 front legs its tail disappears and it can not eat when its mouth is changing. Then the
sekn gats to little
and the frags pol
off thrr sekn an
thaa eyt it. Saum
of the frags bloo
haybools. Frogs lad
eggs that look like
jele and the fish eyt
some but some
hach to tadpoos.
It gros bigr and
bigr and bigr.
skin gets too little and the frogs pull off their skin and they eat it. Some of the frogs blow bubbles. Frogs lay eggs that look like jelly and the fish eat some but some hatch to tadpoles. It (the tadpole) grows bigger and bigger and bigger.

To: Parents

From:

Re: Inventive Spelling
Cumulative Writing Folders

This year your child will take part in an intensive composition program. I will encourage children to write, but will not insist on conventional spelling on first draft papers. Instead, children will be encouraged to spell words as they hear them sounded out. The result of this procedure is inventive spelling, a system which allows me to build on students' skills as students move toward correct spelling while they develop fluency in writing.

Research shows that inventive spelling (the name for children's misspellings before they know the rules adults use to spell) allows students to make errors which are systematic. These errors do not interfere with students' learning to spell correctly later on. Inventive spelling gives children early control over and responsibility for their writing.

As a result of the district's emphasis on writing, I will keep cumulative writing folders for your child. Because of this effort, few, if any, writing samples will leave the classroom. Instead, I will keep each piece of student writing in order to analyze emerging skills and to keep a record of your child's growth as a writer. Of course, you may make arrangements to view your child's folder by arranging for a conference with me.

A further note: Your child will perhaps begin to write stories at home and will use inventive spelling. As an adult, you will want to correct mistakes. This is a perfectly natural reaction, but insisting on correctness in a first draft will inhibit growth in writing so we ask for tolerance. Viewing your child's writing folder and conferencing with me should reassure you.

Approved:

Principal

Para: Padres de familia

De parte de:

Información sobre: Cuadernos sobre la acumulación de la escritura y la invención del deletreo

Este año su niño(a) tomará parte en un programa intensivo en composición. Se les estimulará a los niños a escribir, pero no se les insistirá en el deletreo convencional en sus primeros borradores. Al contrario, se les estimulará a los niños a deletrear las palabras según las pronuncian ellos. El resultado de este procedimiento es la invención del deletreo, un sistema que me permite a edificar sobre las destrezas de los estudiantes según avanzan hacia un deletreo correcto mientras que desarrollan la fluidéz en la escritura.

Los estudios de la investigación muestran que la invención en el deletreo (el nombre que se le dá al deletreo incorrecto de los niños antes de conocer las reglas que los adultos utilizan para deletrear) permite a los estudiantes a hacer errores los cuales son sistemáticos. Estos errores no interfieren más tarde con el aprendizaje de los estudiantes en deletrear correctamente. La invención del deletreo le dá a los niños un control sobre y responsabilidad hacia su escritura a temprana edad.

Como segundo resultado del énfasis del distrito en la escritura es de qué yo mantendré para sus niños unos cuadernos con la acumulación de sus escrituras. Debido a este esfuerzo, pocos, si alguno acaso, ejemplos de sus escrituras saldrán del salón de clases. Por otra parte también yo mantendré cada muestra de escritura del estudiante para poder analizar las destrezas que vayan floreciendo y para mantener un record del desarrollo de su niño(a) como escritor. Por lo tanto, también se les invita a Uds. a hacer arreglos para tener una conferencia conmigo y a venir a ver el cuaderno de su niño(a).

Una nota más: Su niño(a) probablemente comenzará a escribir cuentos en casa y usará la invención del deletreo. Como adultos, probablemente usted querrá corregirle sus errores, lo cual es una reación natural. Pero, al insistir en lo correcto en su primer borrador de su trabajo, le puede impedir su desarrollo en la escritura. Por lo tanto, le pedimos que le tenga tolerancia con su trabajo. El observar el cuaderno de su niño(a), el ver su producto en la escritura, y el conferenciar conmigo se asegurará de los beneficios que a la larga le serán muy fructuosos.

Approved:

Principal

HOW TO REVIEW A WRITING FOLDER
A Guide for Parents

The writing folder is a record of your child's writing development. The folder contains all the writing he/she has done during language arts for the year. (Occasionally, folders may also include pieces drafted in other content areas if these pieces are significant.)

As you look at your child's folder, notice two things particularly:

- the length and complexity of the first piece as compared to the length and complexity of the most recently dated piece; and
- the documentation made by the teacher.

Documentation

Your child's teacher will have analyzed a representative early piece of writing in order to determine what your child knows as a writer. As a result of this analysis, the teacher will have established realistic expectations for your child and will have agreed upon these expectations with the child.

The analysis is fairly straight forward: the teacher simply reviews the piece and notes what that sample illustrates that your child know about writing. For instance, a kindergarten teacher would be interested to see whether or not children knew that writing involves letters or words as well as pictures. A first grade teacher might want to see if students use inventive spelling. Beyond second grade, teachers will look to see if students know to begin writing with an introduction and close with a conclusion, whether or not the writer uses transition words, elaborates text appropriately, etc.

The teacher will have documented (simply listed) those things your child's early writing has demonstrated. This will be a positive list. Teachers do not list things writers do not know.

Once a week this procedure will be repeated so that by simply reviewing teacher documentation, you will be reading a running commentary about things your child has learned as a writer during the current school year.

The teacher documentation should serve as a focus for a conference with your child's teacher should you have concerns about the language arts grade. Use this list to ask questions; it is remarkable testimony to what your child has learned.

LENGTH AND COMPLEXITY OF WRITING SAMPLES

Perhaps the most dramatic illustration of what your child has learned comes from a comparison of early and late writing samples. Differences should be readily apparent.

The most significant difference between early and late pieces will be the length. A simple word count of each piece would reflect change in writing ability since length, that is fluency, is the crucial first step in writing development.

Beyond word count, look for organizing features like introductions and conclusions. Look for things that make writing more explicit like the inclusion of details or more interesting, more involved story lines, and more complex sentence structure. Recognize the difference between a first draft effort (when the writer is <u>not</u> concerned with spelling or punctuation) and a final draft (when the writer has worked to produce writing that is technically "correct").

And correctness is important. Although the emphasis in language arts has changed--we now have students <u>first</u> produce whole pieces of writing and <u>then</u> go back and focus on the subskills of spelling and punctuation and usage rather than the reverse--no one would say that correctness is not an expectation. Research tells us, however, that the continuum is fluency and then form and then correctness. So teachers work first to have students write fluently; then they begin to introduce form--introductions, elaboration, conclusions, etc. Then by having students revise an appropriate number of pieces per six weeks, teachers focus on conventions--spelling, punctuation, usage.

Writing development is an essential part of your child's education, but the development of writing ability is highly individual. It is chiefly through a review of the writing folder that you can appreciate the complexity of what the state expects your child to master and how far your child has moved towards this mastery. On a more humane level, however, the writing folder should be a source of pride to you; and reading through it, hopefully, will be a delight.

Writing Development

It is important to recognize that writing development is neither predictable nor uniform. We have to recognize developmental and linguistic differences, so it is quite likely and not reason for concern to see an elementary child go along for several months with little change in the length and quality of writing samples (or pictures) then suddenly make significant gains.

Writing development is so individual <u>that teachers can not rely solely on whole class expectations</u>.

It is more important to know that the district writing program is based on methods that research has indicated to be <u>most effective in developing student writing ability</u> and that it is a program which addresses the needs of all learners.

To illustrate what might happen with student writers, I would like to tell you about two first grade writers.

The first student drew the same picture with little variation for almost three months whenever he was asked to write. When at last he moved from picture to text, he did not begin with the predictable string of random letters but began to use whole words and then quickly moved into sentences.

The other first grader at the start of the year would only copy words from the board and print his name. Gradually, this child incorporated more and more words in his writing, but the writing was scant because he would only use words he could see to copy. Suddenly in January, however, the student wrote a "book" about fishing, a piece of writing almost three times longer and far more complex than anything to date. The contrast was overwhelming and the teacher could not account for what had prompted the difference, but what is important is that from this point on the writing improved steadily.

These two examples illustrate different students developing differently--even though teachers used the same instructional strategies. What is important is that both students did become writers. These two students simply illustrate the uncomfortable truth that when the child is developmentally ready, that child will write <u>if</u> he/she has been in a program that is non-threatening and well planned. Confidence in your child coupled with patience and praise will do much to foster writing development.